

# Blogs

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## About Blogs

A Blog—a shorthand term that means Web log—is a personal online journal that is frequently updated and intended for general public consumption. In Blackboard Learn, only enrolled users can view and author Blogs. Blogs encourage Students to clearly express their ideas and addresses the need to expand various aspects of social learning. Blogs are an effective means of gaining insight into Students' activities and provide a way to share the knowledge and materials collected.

In Blackboard Learn, Blogs consist of two elements:

- **Blog entries:** Text, images, links, multimedia, Mashups, and attachments added by Course members open for comments.
- **Comments:** Remarks or responses to Blog entries made by other Course members, including the Instructor.

An Instructor can choose to allow students to participate in Blogs in three ways:

- **Course Blogs:** Only the Instructor can create a Course Blog and determines the topic to be addressed. All Course members can add Blog entries and add comments to Blog entries.
- **Individual Blogs:** Only the Instructor can create a Blog for individual Course members to use. Only the owner of the Blog is able to add Blog entries. All other Course members can view and add comments.
- **Group Blogs:** If the Instructor enables the Blogs tool for the Group, all Group members can add Blog entries and make comments on Blog entries, building upon one another. Any Course member can view Group Blogs, but can only add comments. A Group Blog is different from a threaded discussion as each entry does not need to continue the discussion of the previous entry, but can be a complete thought on its own.

The Instructor can edit and delete entries in any of the three Blog types and delete user comments.

## Creating a Blog

Blog writing assignments are another medium for reflective learning. With this type of assignment, Students are expected to display their research, analytical, and communication skills through a series of commentaries meant for public consumption and comment.

In the course environment, Blogs are only able to be viewed by enrolled users. Similar to Journals, Blogs can be used as a graded assignment or ungraded to gather opinions and information.

Instructors can create one or more Blogs for use by Students in their courses. Blog topics must be created before Students can add their entries.

## How to Create a Blog Topic

1. Access the Course.
2. Ensure **Edit Mode** is **ON**.
3. In the **Control Panel**, expand the **Course Tools** section.
4. Select **Blogs**.

5. On the **Blogs** listing page, click **Create Blog** on the Action Bar.
6. On the **Create Blog** page, type a **Name** for the Blog.
7. Type optional **Instructions** for the Blog. Format the text and add images, links, multimedia, Mashups, and attachments using the functions in the Text Editor, if needed. Attachments added using the Text Editor can be launched in a new window and have alternate text added to describe the attachment.
8. Under **Blog Availability**, select the **Yes** option to make it available to users.
9. Use the **Display After** and **Display Until** date and time fields to limit the availability of the Blog. Select the **Display After** and **Display Until** check boxes in order to enable the date and time selections.
10. Under **Blog Participation**, select **Individual to All Students** or **Course**. Select **Allow Anonymous Comments** for Individual Blogs or **Allow Anonymous Entries and Comments** for Course and Group Blogs, if needed.
11. Under **Blog Settings**, select **Monthly** or **Weekly Index Entries**.
12. Optionally, select the check box to **Allow Users to Edit and Delete Entries**.
13. Optionally, select the check box to **Allow Users to Delete Comments**.
14. Select **No grading** or the **Grade** option and type the number of **Points possible**. Points possible will apply to one or more entries made by the user to the Blog topic. Once a Blog is set to be graded, a column is created for it in the Grade Center. It is permanently gradable and cannot be set to **No grading**.
15. Optionally, select the box and the number of entries required to show participants in **Needs Grading** status. Applying this setting will show the Needs Grading icon in the Grade Center and place the entries in the queue on the Needs Grading page after the specified number of entries have been made.
16. Optionally, associate a rubric by pointing to **Add Rubric**. To learn more about [associating](#), [managing](#), and [grading](#) with rubrics, see [Rubrics](#).
17. Click **Submit**.

The Blog topics appear in alphabetical order on the **Blogs** listing page. Columns can be sorted by clicking the column title or caret.

## Creating Blog Entries

Instructors and users can create Blog entries and other Course members can make comments on the entries. Instructors can use Blog entries to provide structure for discussions on class topics and other issues.

On the **Blogs** listing page, under each Blog title, Students can see if the Blog belongs to a Group, the Course, or to Individual Students. Group Blogs can be read by all Course members, but to make an entry, the user must be a Group member.

## How to Create a Blog Entry

1. On the **Blogs** listing page, select a Blog title.
2. On the Blog's topic page, click **Create Blog Entry** on the Action Bar.
3. On the **Create Blog Entry** page, type a **Title** for the Blog entry.

4. Type text in the **Entry Message** text box. Format the text and add images, links, multimedia, Mashups, and attachments using the functions in the Text Editor, if needed. Attachments added using the Text Editor can be launched in a new window and have alternate text added to describe the attachment.
5. If enabled, select the check box for **Post Entry as Anonymous**, if appropriate.
6. Alternatively, under **Blog Entry Files**, browse for a file to attach to the Blog entry.
7. Click **Post Entry** to submit the Blog entry or click **Save Entry as Draft** to add the entry later.

## How to View Drafts

To view or add saved drafts, click **View Drafts** on the Action Bar on the **Blogs** listing page.

## Commenting on a Blog

Because Blogs are meant to be read by others, Students can comment on one another's Blog entries, whether they belong to an individual, the Course, or a Group. The Instructor determines if comments can be made anonymously or deleted. The Instructor can delete any user's comment by clicking the **X**. Comments cannot be edited after they are posted.

## How to Comment on a Blog Entry

1. On the **Blogs** listing page, select a Blog title.
2. On the Blog's topic page, select a Blog to view by selecting the user's name in the side panel under **View Entries by**. The user's Blog entries open in the content frame.
3. Click **Comment** following the user's entry. The **Comment** text box appears.
4. Type a comment in the **Comment** text box.
5. Click **Spell Check** at the bottom of the **Comment** text box to check the spelling of the content before continuing.
6. If enabled, select the check box for **Comment on Entry as Anonymous**, if appropriate.
7. Click **Add**. Click the **Comments** link below the entry to view the comment.

## Editing and Managing Blogs

Instructors can edit basic properties of a Blog topic, including the name, instructions, availability, and some settings. Once a Blog topic is designated for individuals or the Course, it cannot be changed to the other. Instructors can edit any user's Blog entries and can delete Blog topics. Comments can be deleted by the Instructor, but no user is allowed to edit Comments.

## How to Edit a Blog

1. Ensure **Edit Mode** is **ON**.
2. On the **Blogs** listing page, click a Blog's Action Link to access the contextual menu.
3. Select **Edit**.
4. On the **Edit Blog** page, make changes.
5. Click **Submit**.

## How to Delete a Blog

1. Ensure **Edit Mode** is **ON**.
2. On the **Blogs** listing page, click a Blog's Action Link to access the contextual menu.
3. Select **Delete**.
4. Click **OK** in the confirmation window. All entries and comments are deleted.

**Note:** When a graded Blog is selected for deletion, a **Delete Confirmation** page appears. Select the appropriate check box or boxes to delete the Blog or the Blog and the Grade Center column.

## How to Change the Availability of a Blog

1. Ensure **Edit Mode** is **ON**.
2. On the **Blogs** listing page, select the check box next to the appropriate Blog.
3. Point to **Availability** on the Action Bar to access the drop-down list.
4. Select **Make Available** or **Make Unavailable**.

## Troubleshooting Blog Management

If	Then
a Blog is deleted while users are posting	the Blog and all comments are deleted.
a Blog is made unavailable while users are posting	the Blog remains visible to the Instructor in Edit Mode, but does not appear to users.
the <b>Allow Users to Edit and Delete Entries</b> setting is changed	entries remain, but users cannot edit them.
the <b>Allow Users to Delete Comments</b> setting is changed	comments remain and users cannot delete them.
the Blog is set to be graded	the setting cannot be changed. The Blog needs to be deleted and the Grade Center column must be deleted from the Grade Center to remove it. The Grade Center column for the Blog can also not be included in Grade Center calculations, if the Blog entries are needed, but will not be graded.

## Grading Blogs and Journals

Instructors can grade participation in Blogs and Journals for individuals and Groups. Once a Blog or Journal topic is set to be graded, a grade column is automatically created in the Grade Center. Then, individual Student and Group entries can be graded from the Blog or Journal topic page, where all entries and comments can be referenced, as the grade is determined. An assigned grade can also be edited from the Blog or Journal topic page and the Grade Center is updated. Students can view their Blog or Journal grades in the My Grades tool.

## About Grading Blogs and Journals

Instructors can grade the quality of the discussion, as well as the number of entries and comments that are made by an individual or a Course Group.

Grades for Blogs and Journals are changed, deleted, reverted, and overridden just like other grades in the Grade Center.

Instructors can determine whether or not users can view their own grades and feedback by editing the column information in the Grade Center. To learn more, see [How to Edit or Select Options for Grade Center Columns on page Error! Bookmark not defined.](#)

A graded Blog or Journal topic cannot be changed to ungraded. Delete the graded Blog or Journal topic from the Blogs or Journals listing page and the Grade Center, and create a new ungraded topic. Alternatively, to retain entries, set the Blog or Journal Grade Center column to not be included in calculations.

The Blog topic page contains a side panel where entries are graded for individuals and Course Groups. The side panel consists of three sections which expand to four when grading begins:

- **About this Blog:** Includes type, number of entries, and number of comments.
- **View Entries by:** Users who have submitted one or more entries appear with exclamation marks, the needs grading icon. Click a user's name to access the **Blog Grade** section, where Grades, Feedback and Grading Notes are added. Use the **Previous User** and **Next User** arrows in this section to navigate among users to grade or click a user's name in the list. Click **Show Members without Entries** to see all users in the course; users who have not added entries are included in this list. Click **Hide Members without Entries** to return to the list of users who have entries needing a grade.
- **Index:** For a selected user or all Course members, view a list of entry titles added during the index span—by month or by week.

The Journal topic page contains a side panel where entries are graded for individuals and Course Groups. The side panel consists of three sections which expand to four when grading begins:

- **About this Journal:** Includes author, number of entries, and number of comments.
- **More Journals:** Users who have submitted one or more entries appear with exclamation marks, the needs grading icon. Click a user's name to access the **Journal Grade** section, where Grades, Feedback and Grading Notes are added. Use the **Previous User** and **Next User** arrows in this section to navigate among users to grade or click a user's name in the list. Click **Show Empty Journals** to see all users in the course; users who have not added entries are included in this list. Click **Hide Empty Journals** to return to the list of users who have entries needing a grade.
- **Index:** For a selected user, view a list of entry titles added during the index span—by month or by week.

The grading process for Blogs and Journals can begin from the Grade Center, the [Needs Grading page](#), the Course Tools area, or the course location where the Blog or Journal has been deployed.

## How to Grade Blog Entries for Individuals

1. Access the Blog topic page and select the Blog entry or entries to grade by selecting the user's name in the side panel under **View Entries by**. The user's Blog entry or entries open in the content frame.
2. Under **Blog Grade** in the side panel, click **Edit Grade**.
3. Type a point total in the **Current Grade Value** text box, or if a Rubric has been created for this graded Blog, click **View Rubric**. [Rubrics](#) contains more information about [grading](#) with rubrics.

4. Optionally, type **Feedback** for the user and **Grading Notes**, which appear to the Instructor and Grader only. Optionally, use the **Spell Check** function in the bottom of each text box. Click **Text Editor** to access all the Text Editor functions for formatting text and adding URLs, attachments, images, Mashups, and multimedia.
5. Click **Save Grade** to add the Grade, Feedback, and Grading Notes to the **Blog Grade** section and to the Grade Center.
6. The Grade, Feedback, or Grading Notes can be edited by clicking the **Edit Grade** function again at any time. The changes appear in the **Blog Grade** section and in the Grade Center. The changes are documented in the Grade Center in the **Grade History** tab on the user's **Grade Details** page.

## How to Grade Journal Entries for Individuals

1. Access the Journal topic page and select the Journal entry or entries to grade by selecting the user's name in the side panel under **More Journals**. The user's Journal entry or entries open in the content frame.
2. Under **Journal Grade** in the side panel, click **Edit Grade**.
3. Type a point total in the **Current Grade Value** text box, or if a Rubric has been created for this graded Journal, click **View Rubric**. [Rubrics](#) contains more information about [grading](#) with rubrics.
4. Optionally, type **Feedback** for the user and **Grading Notes**, which appear to the Instructor and Grader only. Optionally, use the **Spell Check** function in the bottom of each text box. Click **Text Editor** to access all the Text Editor functions for formatting text and adding URLs, attachments, images, Mashups, and multimedia.
5. Click **Save Grade** to add the Grade, Feedback, and Grading Notes to the **Journal Grade** section and to the Grade Center.
6. The Grade, Feedback, or Grading Notes can be edited by clicking the **Edit Grade** function again at any time. The changes appear in the **Journal Grade** section and in the Grade Center. The changes are documented in the Grade Center in the **Grade History** tab on the user's **Grade Details** page.

**Note:** If a Rubric will be used to grade Blog or Journal entries, it must be created and added in advance.

## How to Delete a Graggable Blog or Journal

If a graggable Blog or Journal is no longer needed, it can be deleted. It is permanently deleted and the action cannot be undone. On the Blogs or Journals listing page, select **Delete** from the contextual menu for the item and the **Delete Confirmation** page appears.

There are two options on the **Delete Confirmation** page:

- **Do not select check boxes:** The Blog or Journal will be deleted, but the Grade Center column and scores assigned are retained. For example, all Student entries have been graded and you want to keep the Grade Center column for the final grade calculations. If the Blog or Journal is deleted, yet the Grade Center column is retained, the column can be deleted from the Grade Center at any time.
- **Select the check boxes:** The grade column in the Grade Center AND the Blog or Journal are deleted. For example, if you do not want to include the grade column for the Blog or Journal entries in the final grade, you can safely delete all.

Click **Remove** to complete the deletion.

## How to Grade a Blog or Journal for all Group Members

A Group Blog or Journal is graded following the same steps as for an individual. When the entries are submitted, all Group members' names appear with the exclamation mark, the needs grading icon. When a grade is added for a Group Blog or Group Journal, the grade is automatically given to all the members of the Group and is populated in the corresponding column in the Grade Center for each Group member. All members are assigned a grade, regardless if a member did not contribute. The Instructor can read all the entries for the Group Blog or Group Journal and add one grade on the Group Blog or Group Journal topic page.

Students can view their Group Blog or Group Journal grades in the My Grades tool and on the Group Blog or Group Journal topic page by selecting their names.

## How to Change an Individual Member's Group Grade

An individual Group member can be assigned a different grade than the Group by selecting his or her name to access the Grade section. In the content frame, the individual member's entries and comments appear. After assigning a new Grade and Feedback for the individual member, the new information appears in the side panel. The Grade the individual member received and the Grade the Group received are both shown.

If a Group member's grade is changed, and a new Group grade is given, the new Group grade will not affect the individual's new grade. The individual's new grade will not appear to the other Group members.

The Group grade and the individual Group member's edited grade appear in the Grade Center in the column that was automatically created when the graded Group Blog or Group Journal was enabled. Grayed out cells appear in the Group Blog or Group Journal column for course members who are not part of the Group. A Group or individual member's grade can also be edited from the Grade Center.

## How to Revert a Member's Edited Grade

It is possible to revert a member's edited grade to the original Group grade, which all Group members received. Alternatively, edit the grade that was changed on the Group Blog or Group Journal page by selecting the user.

1. From the Grade Center, access the member's **Grade Details** page.
2. After a member's Group grade has been edited, the **Revert To Group Grade** function appears. Click **Revert To Group Grade**.
3. Click **OK**. The member's grade is changed to the original Group grade.
4. Click **Return to Grade Center** to return to the main Grade Center page and view the edited grade column. This grade change also appears on the Group Blog or Group Journal page when the user's name is selected.

## Group Deletion

If a Group is no longer needed and **Delete** is selected from the contextual menu, a **Delete Confirmation** page appears. If grade columns exist in the Grade Center for the Group, such as for a graded Group Blog or Group Journal, the columns can be retained. On the **Delete Confirmation** page, do not select the check boxes for any columns that need to be preserved.